

ABSTRACT

When a command for stopping electric generation by a fuel cell is issued, shutoff valves are closed (at time t_1), and then a time-dependent change in pressure (P) in a closed
5 passage area including the fuel cell is detected. A pressure change speed (dP_1 , i.e., an inclination of L_1) when the pressure (P) is in a first pressure range (R_a) in the vicinity of atmospheric pressure and a pressure change speed (dP_2 , i.e., an inclination of L_2) when the pressure (P) is in a second pressure range (R_b) that is on a high pressure side of the first pressure range (R_a) are detected, and both the pressure change speeds (dP_1 , dP_2) are
10 compared with each other. When a difference between both the pressure change speeds (dP_1 , dP_2) is equal to or larger than a predetermined value (P_c), it is determined that there is a hole in an electrolyte membrane of the fuel cell.

Selected Drawing: FIG. 4